

Members

Sen. Potch Wheeler, Chairperson
Sen. Johnny Nugent
Sen. John Waterman
Sen. James Lewis
Sen. Richard Young
Sen. Larry Lutz
Rep. James Bottorff, Vice-Chairperson
Rep. Denny Oxley
Rep. Scott Mellinger
Rep. William Friend
Rep. Jack Lutz
Rep. Michael Smith



WATER RESOURCES STUDY COMMITTEE

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Authority: IC 2-5-25

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: September 6, 2001
Meeting Time: 10:00 A.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St., Room 233
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 1

Members Present: Sen. Potch Wheeler, Chairperson; Sen. John Waterman; Sen. James Lewis; Sen. Richard Young; Sen. Larry Lutz; Rep. James Bottorff, Vice-Chairperson; Rep. Denny Oxley; Rep. Jack Lutz; Rep. Michael Smith.

Members Absent: Sen. Johnny Nugent; Rep. Scott Mellinger; Rep. William Friend.

The chairperson called the meeting to order at 10:10 A.M., and had the members introduce themselves. Before asking for interested parties to discuss HB 2097-2001 (Exhibit A), concerning plumber and well driller continuing education, the chairperson explained that the term "well digger", while often used, is archaic, and that the correct term is "well driller".

The chairperson then asked **John Aufderheide**, a well driller representing the Indiana Groundwater Association, to provide background for the Committee members concerning the bill. Mr. Aufderheide explained that pump installers are not currently licensed. The 2001 legislation would have required a plumber to have a water well and pump installation contractor license to install or repair water well pumps or water well pumping equipment and would also have established a continuing education requirement (through DNR) for

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.ai.org/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

water well and pump installation contractors and well drillers. Mr. Aufderheide said that the proposed legislation would lead to better education for the industry and safer ground water for the public. He also suggested "grandfathering" current plumbers to give them a pump installers license. Mr. Aufderheide also discussed the role of local ordinances with respect to regulation of wells, and noted that there is some local variance as to whether wells must be capped when municipal water is hooked up.

Brad White, welldriller, said that while a homeowner might be able to do his own work, it may be best to leave this to experienced installers.

Kim Wheeler, well driller, pointed out that continuing education will also be necessary to educate the persons, such as local boards of health, who will police well diggers. Licensing is important, but education is vital.

Scott Wagner, Whitley County Health Department, noted that wells are drilled into the aquifer. Nonlicensed installations may contaminate not only that well but the entire aquifer, thus affecting the entire community.

Pat Carroll, IDEM drinking water program, discussed the potential for contamination present in well installations, concerns about ongoing maintenance, and the existing systems of certification and licensure that are required by state and federal law for community systems, schools and places of business.

Mark Bash, DNR Division of Water, pointed out that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) licenses well drillers under current law. He noted that continuing education has been a long-time concern, and said that DNR does get complaints from homeowners about improper installations. The current rules concerning well drillers have been in place since 1988. Continuing education would be a good way to distribute information concerning changes in the rules and updates on industry practices.

Dan Mathis, DNR, stated that DNR's Division of Water does not currently oversee any continuing education programs. He discussed the need to protect groundwater and said that 21 other states have license requirements and continuing education programs for pump installation. He suggested that a local system of permits and enforcement might be the answer for Indiana, and noted that the current enforcement system "has no teeth."

Senator Waterman observed that aquifers are threatened on a large scale by industry and by a lack of enforcement. He noted that continuing education might be a "sticking point" and also said that any proposed legislation should not prohibit a landowner from servicing his own well.

Glenn Pratt, legislative director of the Sierra Club, discussed prior attempts to establish a state drought plan, as well as support among municipal, environmental, business, and agricultural organizations for a low flow plan. He suggested that the Committee review a 1999 House Concurrent Resolution (HCR 88) which urged the Governor to establish a Water Shortage Permanent Task Force.

The chairperson announced that the next meeting of the Committee would be on Thursday, September 27, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was then adjourned.